

ABOUT THE PROGRAM



BOOK SUMMARY

Two sisters, one farm. A family is split when their father leaves their shared inheritance entirely to Helen, his younger daughter. Despite baking award-winning pies at the local nursing home, her older sister, Edith, struggles to make what most people would call a living. So she can't help wondering what her life would have been like with even a portion of the farm money her sister kept for herself.

With the proceeds from the farm, Helen builds one of the most successful light breweries in the country, and makes their company motto ubiquitous: "Drink lots. It's Blotz." Where Edith has a heart as big as Minnesota, Helen's is as rigid as a steel keg. Yet one day, Helen will find she needs some help herself, and she could find a potential savior close to home. . . if it's not too late.



Meanwhile, Edith's granddaughter, Diana, grows up knowing that the real world requires a tougher constitution than her grandmother possesses. She earns a shot at learning the IPA business from the ground up--will that change their fortunes forever, and perhaps reunite her splintered family?

EVENTS

March 27th, 5:30-7:30pm **PAL: My Midwest Reception (display runs March 27-April 27)**

April 1st, 6-8:00pm **Chat and Craft: Cookie Cutter Stamped Tea Towels**

April 3rd, 5:30pm **Friends of JPL: From Page to Pint: Celebrating "The Lager Queen" with Local Brews. This is a Friends member only event @ Chaos Brewery**

April 8th 6:00-7:00pm **MSSU Dr. Megan Bever - "Beer, Bodies, and Being: Gender and Identity in American Culture"**

April 9th, 11:00am-while supplies last **Take-Home Kit: Painted Cork Coasters**

April 12th, 2-3:00pm **Board Games & Brews @ Chaos Brewery**

April 15th, 6-7:00pm **Pie Making with Big R's Carla**

April 17th, 11am-while supplies last **Makerspace Take & Make Kit: DIY Bread in a Bag**

April 17th, 1-2:00pm **Let's Dish Book Discussion**

April 17th, 6-7:00pm **Let's Dish Book Discussion**

April 22nd, 2:30-3:30pm **MSSU Dr. Megan Bever- "Beer, Bodies, and Being: Gender and Identity in American Culture" @ MSSU**

April 22nd, 6:00pm **Dontcha Know Midwest Trivia Night**

April 24th, 6:00pm **Author J. Ryan Stradal Visit & Book Signing**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



J. Ryan Stradal's NYT bestselling debut, *Kitchens of the Great Midwest*, won the 2016 American Booksellers Association Indie's Choice Award for Adult Debut Book of the Year, the 2016 SCIBA award for the year's best fiction title, and the 2016 Midwest Booksellers Choice Award for debut fiction. His second novel, *The Lager Queen of Minnesota*, was an instant national bestseller.

Born and raised in Minnesota, he now lives in Los Angeles. He likes books, craft beer, wine, root beer, sports, and peas.



BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

1. At the center of the story is a family divided over an unfairly split inheritance. How do you feel about how each sister reacted to their father's decision? Did this situation evoke memories of lopsided inheritances or contested wills in your own family?
2. Do you enjoy beer? Have you ever visited a local brewery? Did this book make you want to?
3. Helen instantly loves beer on her first taste and soon comes to the conclusion that she wants to be a brewer. How would you characterize her ambition? Does her relationship with Orval feel honest or calculated?
4. When we first meet Diana, she is stealing tools from garages and selling them on the internet to make money. In spite of this, how does she become a sympathetic character? What actions does she make that reveal her kindness and generosity?
5. Edith likes to think of herself as a simple person. Or does she? In what ways is she actually quite complicated? How does she reveal herself to be as calculating or focused as Helen?
6. Have you ever visited Minnesota or know anyone from there? Do you feel the portrayal of Midwestern people is accurate?
7. Edith is convinced that her life would have been different had she received her half of the family farm. How would it have been different? Consequently, how would Diana's life have been different?
8. Each of the sisters experience the loss of a beloved husband. How are they different in how they express their grief? How are they similar?
9. The relationships within the book, as in life, necessarily evolve and adapt as time passes. How do you feel about Diana and Clarissa's friendship, and the reasons they grew apart?
10. If there was one more chapter after the final scene, what do you imagine might happen?
11. Who do you feel is the "lager queen of Minnesota," if anyone?
12. Which sister's story did you most enjoy? Do you relate to one more than the other?

READ-A-LIKES

- **Kitchens of the Great Midwest** by J. Ryan Stradal
- **All Adults Here** by Emma Straub
- **Marrying the Ketchups** by Jennifer Close
- **Nothing to See Here** by J. Kevin Wilson
- **The Bookish Life of Nina Hill** by Abbi Waxman
- **Ask Again, Yes** by Mary Beth Keane
- **The Dutch House** by Ann Patchett
- **Ordinary Grace** by William Kent Krueger
- **Long Bright River** by Liz Moore
- **The Sentence** by Louise Erdrich